

Joined in life and service

Army married couples face common

struggles, gain common experiences

Story by Pvt. Benjamin Z. Etzioni, 1st Armored Division PAO



John and Carrie Harryman cut into their wedding cake. The couple, both captains with the 1st Armored Division, met during their officer basic course in Virginia and married July 19, 1997.

WIESBADEN, Germany – She realized she was running behind schedule when she looked at her watch after returning from her morning workout. She jumped in the shower, grabbed a quick bite to eat, threw on a uniform and darted out the door. When she finally got to her office and had a moment to sit down, she noticed that her pants felt a bit baggier than normal. She didn't think she had lost any weight so she wondered why her pants' waistline felt so loose. Finally, she realized what had happened.

She was wearing her husband's battle-dress-uniform pants.

"It was lucky for me that we wear almost the same size," said Pfc. Christina A. Wright, a prescribed load list clerk with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Armored Division, motorpool. "However, I still spent the rest

of the day fidgeting with my belt trying to keep my pants from falling down."

So it goes when both the husband and the wife wear the BDU pants in the family. Keeping uniforms straight is one of the many challenges soldiers face when their spouses are fellow soldiers. From the long hours, training exercises and deployments to shining boots, pressing uniforms and performing proper push-ups and sit-ups, they share in each other's joys and labors. But...

"Being married to another soldier is not easy, but I would not have it any other way," said Christina Wright.

Soldiers from the 1st Armored Division stationed in Germany face a difficult decision as soon as they decide to get married. Where do they have the ceremony? Some choose to fly home so that their families can attend. Others

choose to have the ceremony in Germany so their friends and colleagues can attend. Some even do both.

"We had two weddings, one in Germany and one in my hometown in Utah," said Christina Wright. "We obviously had to have our families involved but we really wanted to have a ceremony that involved all our friends in Germany, too. So we had two ceremonies."

Christina Wright said one of her biggest regrets was that they had to have their wedding in Germany on a workday because it was the only time the chapel they wanted was available. Because of that, many of the guests at the wedding had to attend in BDUs.

Pfc. Richard E. Jaramillo, a G-1 personnel services specialist, and his wife Spc. Toni G. Jaramillo, a medical specialist with Company E, 123rd Main Support Battalion, had a different perspective.

"I only wanted to marry the same girl once," said Richard Jaramillo. "Having two ceremonies might have been nice but we were worried that one would have taken away something from the other."

Soldiers stationed overseas face a variety of challenges in their social lives even before they get married. From the decision of whether or not they want to date local nationals to the pressure of a pending assignment change, many times they have to make choices under completely different circumstances than they would normally face if they were not in the Army.

"I don't think I would have felt comfortable marrying a German because of the language and cultural

differences," said Spc. Michael T. Wright, communications chief for the division commander. "Marriage takes a lot of work without adding those factors into it."

"If I had been back in the States I probably would have been more focused on being a teenager than settling down and getting married," said Christina Wright. "If he was not already on orders to go to his next assignment or if we had met outside of the Army, we probably would have dated longer and moved in with each other and spent more time together before we got married. But we have no regrets whatsoever."

On the other hand, the Army income enables couples who feel they are ready to make the step to marry when they otherwise might not be able to.

"We knew we were ready emotionally," said Richard Jaramillo. "But if we had not been in the Army, I would have to say that we would have been too young and we would not have had the financial security to do it."

Married officer couples face many of the same issues as enlisted couples along with some different ones of their own. Capt. Carrie L. Harryman, an administrative law attorney with the 1AD Judge Advocate General's Office, and Capt. John T. Harryman, a trial counsel lawyer with the 1AD JAG office, met during their officer basic course in Charlottesville, Va.

"We were in the same class," said Capt. John Harryman. "Since her maiden name was Horn we were even in the same squad. Through all of our classes we started getting to know each

other pretty well. But we really got to know each other when I was squad leader

during a land navigation exercise and I got us all lost for a couple of hours."



Photo by Pvt. Benjamin Z. Etzioni

Spc. Michael T. Wright, communications chief for the 1AD commanding general, and Pfc. Christina A. Wright, a prescribed load list clerk with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company motorpool, talk about what went on during the day on the way to take the shuttle bus from Bad Kreuznach to Wiesbaden.